

# BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENT CONFERENCE REPORT

**SUBJECT:** Monthly SHPO-FHWA-ACOE-NHDOT Cultural Resources Meeting

**DATE OF CONFERENCES:** March 11, 2021

**LOCATION OF CONFERENCE:** John O. Morton Building

*Due to the Covid 19 Event, this meeting was a scheduled Zoom Meeting*

## ATTENDED BY:

### **NHDOT**

Sheila Charles  
Ron Crickard  
Jill Edelmann  
Bob Juliano  
Marc Laurin

### **VHB**

Hannah Beato  
Nicole Benjamin-Ma  
Greg Goodrich  
Bob Landry  
Pete Walker

### **NHDHR/NHDNCR**

Laura Black  
David Trubey  
Nadine Miller

### **Dover, City of**

Christopher Parker

### **Consulting Parties**

Lulu Pickering, Town of Newington  
Nathan Holth, Historicbridges.org

### **FHWA**

Jamie Sikora

## PROJECTS/PRESENTATIONS REVIEWED THIS MONTH:

*(minutes on subsequent pages)*

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### **Newington-Dover 11238S, NHS-027-1(037)**

Participants: Peter Walker, Greg Goodrich, Bob Landry, Nicole Benjamin-Ma, Hannah Beato, VHB; Jennifer Reczek, Ron Crickard, Bob Juliano, Marc Laurin, NHDOT; Christopher Parker, City of Dover; Nathan Holth, Lulu Pickering - Consulting Parties

Continued consultation in advance of releasing the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, including review of the latest iteration of the draft Memorandum of Agreement stipulations.

After the Adverse Effects Memo was signed on January 2, 2020, there were three cultural resources interagency meetings among NHDOT, NHDHR, FHWA, ACOE, and the Consulting/Interested Parties that focused exclusively on developing mitigation for adverse effects resulting from the project. These meetings were held on January 9, 2020, January 24, 2020, and October 8, 2020. These three meetings continued the discussion regarding potential mitigation for the loss of the General Sullivan Bridge (GSB). Specifically, these meetings

sought feedback on the stipulations to be included in the Draft SEIS and eventual Memorandum of Agreement (MOA).

The basis for the March 11, 2021 discussion was a document entitled “2021-01-27\_GSB Section 106 Mitigation Stipulations” distributed by Jill Edelmann to Consulting and Interested Parties on January 27, 2021. The goal for the meeting was to solicit feedback on the latest draft of stipulations, which will be included in the forthcoming release of the Draft SEIS for public comment. Jamie Sikora shared that FHWA’s preliminary legal review of the Draft SEIS should be completed soon. Pete Walker indicated that publication of the Draft SEIS is anticipated within two to four weeks. Given that schedule, additional revisions to the stipulations would need to be discussed following the publication of the Draft SEIS. P. Walker noted that Kitty Henderson, Consulting party representing the Historic Bridge Foundation, was unable to attend this meeting and has indicated that she would provide comments separately.

### **Discussion of Draft Stipulations**

The group discussed the draft stipulations as follows:

#### **Stipulation A - Marketing the GSB**

The stipulation will be revised to indicate that a marketing a portion of the GSB for reuse would satisfy the requirements of 23 USC Section 144.

#### **Stipulation B - Documentation of the GSB**

- L. Black noted that while other types of mitigation are often currently favored over HABS/HAER style documentation, HAER documentation was already completed for the GSB abutments so it seems reasonable to complete it for the rest of the bridge. NHDHR recommended that NHDOT contact NPS to discuss the procedures required to build on the existing HAER from the approaches. J. Edelmann will contact NPS.
- L. Pickering requested hard copy and electronic copy distributions the Newington Board of Selectmen and the Portsmouth Athenaeum.

#### **Stipulation C - NHDOT Bridge Inventory and Bridge Management Plan – Promotion and Accessibility**

- The Bridge Management Plan is still in draft form and is not yet available to the public. NHDOT Bridge Maintenance is reviewing the draft and will be providing comments. When complete, the Bridge Management Plan will be posted on NHDOT’s website.
- J. Edelmann noted that NHDHR had requested that the number of sessions to promote the plan be specified in the stipulation. NHDHR noted the assumption that the Bridge Inventory and Bridge Management Plan were to be completed and promoted regardless of the GSB mitigation, so DOT should consider how much promotion should be assigned as mitigation for the GSB project. Stipulation should be clearer and identify specific deliverables that can be checked off.
- The discussion turned toward the potential for a case study of the GSB. J. Edelmann clarified that there are currently no case studies in the Bridge Management Plan, and that the Bridge Inventory is broad and looks at the full State of NH. If a case study were to be developed it would be a separate document.
- NHDOT, NHDHR and VHB have scheduled a meeting on March 12, 2021 to discuss the logistics of integrating the bridge inventory into EMMIT.

#### **Stipulation D - Interpretive Program**

- Videos
  - NHDHR and NHDOT recently discussed the logistics and challenges of producing educational films, including target audiences, frequency of film showings, paid or free viewing, video length, and promotion.

- As part of this discussion, it was discussed that short videos (five-seven minutes) would be of more value than a lengthy documentary. Short videos can be posted online and generally attract more views than longer formats.
- L. Pickering shared that someone who served on the USS Albacore created a video tour series of the submarine. The video was shared with local students in Newington and was well-received. L. Pickering suggested a similar video concept be developed for the GSB.
- Interpretive panels/Exhibit
  - NHDHR requested that the topics and final number of interpretive panels be stipulated in the MOA. DOT and VHB will add those to the next draft of the stipulations.
  - The Woodman Museum has expressed interest in having an exhibit and has an education program in place; DOT will arrange another discussion with Woodman to discuss potential details for incorporation into the mitigation stipulations.
- Lesson Plan
  - NHDHR noted that other MOAs with a lesson plan stipulation have run into difficulties recently. Teacher buy-in, ability of incorporation into current curricula, and lack of specific information about what would be required of teachers have been sticking points. Existing education requirements and timing are also concerns.
  - Should only pursue if discussions with school districts, principals, and teachers indicate they are on board. NHDOT should reach out to local schools if this stipulation is pursued.
  - L. Pickering asked why a lot of the discussion has revolved around elementary school-aged students. P. Walker noted that local history is part of the fourth grade curriculum in NH. That's why the Woodman Museum has an existing program for fourth graders and has a working relationship with the local school. Though it's noted that the Woodman Museum is open to the public and the program could be available for all ages to view.
  - NHDHR asked about discussions with Historic New England regarding a co-sponsored program regarding the Cape Cod Canal Bridges and the GSB. N. Benjamin-Ma noted that the HNE program hadn't been fully developed because it was intended as an in-person program prior to COVID. HNE's educational program director said the program was built around ephemera in the HNE collection, so students learn about the bridge structures and their connection with the larger transportation network and tourism.
- Facilitator
  - N. Miller suggested hiring a potential facilitator to monitor and oversee the MOA commitments, like at the Memorial Bridge.
  - NHDOT noted that the Memorial Bridge Project had more people available to support this role, and the facilitator was mostly responsible for public outreach, not overseeing the execution of the stipulations.

Stipulation E - Rehabilitation of the Newington Railroad Depot and Toll House and State-Owned Land on Bloody Point

- J. Edelmann restated that the stipulations specify that the building assessment would be completed in accordance with NH Preservation Alliance requirements and provide cost estimates, a list of work that would need to be done, critical repairs and stabilization work.
- L. Pickering stated that NHDOT should be responsible for repairing/securing the exterior. Presumably, the Town would be responsible for the interior, since that work would depend on future uses.
- The land master plan would be completed with Newington and would focus on how best to use the land and building moving forward.
- L. Pickering asked about the potential requirement to market the property at fair market value. B. Landry noted that the fair market value property sale would begin only if the Town of Newington backs out of the property transfer. It was noted that J. Reczek is actively working to determine a legal mechanism to transfer the property.
- L. Pickering requested that the cost value needs to be finalized before the MOA and ROD are signed.

- J. Edlmann agreed that the stipulation could focus more on the transfer to Newington. It is not just about the highest bidder – adherence to the standards is the focus. It was also acknowledged that the stipulation should be revised to specify the stabilization of the Depot, rather than the rehabilitation, to reflect that NHDOT’s anticipated financial commitment is to the stabilization of the property. The change will be made for the next draft of the stipulations.

#### Stipulation F - Dover Recreational Trail

- Chris Parker shared that the City of Dover is working on a trail expansion through Bellamy Park linking a trail from NH 108 through the high school and middle school, through Bellamy Park, to NH 155. A portion of trail would be ideal for a 100-foot span from the GSB to cross the Bellamy River. C. Parker suggested this could be a location for interpretive elements as well.
- On January 22, 2021, J. Reczek and C. Parker walked the area. The City had contracted with Fuss and O'Neill on the trail project. Reusing a portion of the GSB could be advantageous mitigation. NHDOT could incorporate a series of plaques on new bridge which explain to the public that a rehabbed span is located in Dover as part of a recreational trail – inviting the public to visit the rehabilitated GSB span. J. Edlmann clarified that this conversation has been recent and therefore the stipulations should not hold the City of Dover to a reuse commitment, especially since a feasibility study remains pending. Also of note is that if there is a potential for a bidding war for the GSB, the selection would come down to reuse, not dollar amount.

#### Next Steps

- VHB and NHDOT will revise Stipulation A to indicate that a portion of the GSB may be reused.
- VHB and NHDOT - Further coordinate with other entities as needed to solidify stipulation commitments, including:
  - NPS for HAER Documentation.
  - Newington Board of Selectmen and Lulu Pickering for discussion of the Depot.
- VHB and NHDOT will determine the number of interpretive panels and the topics.
- NHDOT will clarify the intentions of Stipulation E.
- The next iteration of the draft stipulations will be incorporated into the Draft SEIS for public comment if time allows. Otherwise, input from this meeting will be considered along with comments received on the Draft SEIS for the next draft of the stipulations.
- Additional coordination will occur with the Woodman Museum.